

Global iNSIGHT

Multiplying Disciple Makers



February 2024

Disability in Missions

Disability: The Facts

People living with a form of disability are part of the largest minority group on earth. Overall, there are about 61 million Americans with disabilities, making up 26% of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, according to the Centers for Disease Control data from 2019. This group includes people with hearing, vision, cognitive, walking, self-care or independent living difficulties. Over half of Americans older than eighty are also in this group. Often, these individuals see themselves as others see them: they are a burden; or they rather be forgotten than to be given limited resources. This is a demonic lie that is heard in the West, and even more so in developing nations. The World Health Organization states that, an estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. This represents 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 of us. Some persons with disabilities die up to twenty years earlier than those without disabilities.



Disability in Our Backyard?

Have you heard of the "Baby Boomer" generation? These are the 76 million people born between 1946 and 1965 who have reached or are reaching retirement age. In the US, it is estimated that 10,000 of them retire each day: that is 3,650,000 every year! Out of them all, 45% are already

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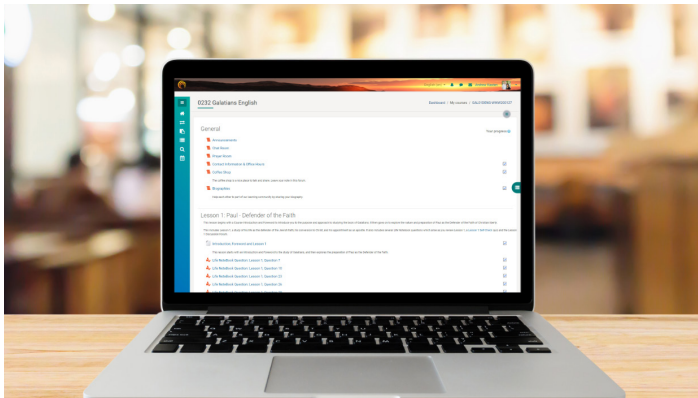
disabled. As they continue aging, 70% of them will become disabled and require accessible housing or nursing home care before they pass on. This is a huge social concern because, 70% of 3,650,000 people, is 2,550,000 disabled people each year for the next twenty years. That is over 50 million



people! One thing that's not fading away is how ambivalent the society at large treats the elderly, sick, and disabled. How are you affected by these facts? What is the role of the church? We must do more by the grace of God, and include the group of disabled people in all our programs.

Serving Pastoral Leaders with Disability

At iTEE Global, we extended our services to train pastoral leaders affected by disability. In our pursuit of multiplying disciple-makers across the nations, we are reaching out to students and facilitators with disabilities. Thankfully, for those with a cane or on wheelchair, they can use our virtual platform effectively. The challenge of accessibility is for the hearing or visual impaired. But with joy, each step moves us closer to our goal.



It would be a blessing for us, and certainly for the glory of God for 100 wheelchair-bound individuals to join us - pastoral leaders living with disability to be trained to become disciple makers. This pursuit is not because of pity. This people group needs

discipleship and pastoral training. They will be able to participate in what God is doing around the world. The goal is to enroll them as students and train some as facilitators. Others may work behind the scenes through research, communications, administration and finance. A wonderful aspect of iTEE Global is accessibility. By using the internet, someone with a disability can virtually join us from any location. One of these students commented, "The Galatians course has been wonderful."

Regardless of their disability, pastoral leaders are able to learn and become equipped efficiently to serve in the kingdom of God.

God's Plan: Ministry in China

Kevin Avery



When it comes to disability ministry, Kevin Avery's interaction has been unusual. He was a healthy non-disabled individual when he started ministry with disabled people many years ago. Now, just shy of 49, he preaches and ministers from his wheelchair.

From 2001 to 2003, Kevin and his wife, Dayna, were English teachers in China. Kevin taught children affected by intellectual and physical disabilities in his free time. Although the children's level of English was rather poor, Kevin was forever changed by their joy. This class was their first chance to belong to a group and make friends. In 2003, Kevin and Dayna left China to return to the US. His prayer was to return to China one day and work fulltime among such children.

A Rather Sad Diagnosis

Kevin graduated with an MDiv from seminary in 2006. A year later, Molly was born, and two years later, Hudson followed. As a couple, they wanted to return to China after the birth of their two kids; but they could not. A few months before Hudson's birth, Kevin was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. He wondered if he could even continue serving as a part-time pastor or chaplain in the US, much less as a fulltime minister overseas.

Ministry in China Part 2

But with God, nothing is impossible! With passports in hand and God's calling for ministry in China in their hearts, Kevin, Dayna and two small children had to trust the promise in 1 Peter 4:11 of God providing the strength needed to serve. For eight and half years, they served in China. Those were wonderful years! Indeed, Kevin joyfully shared God's love through creative arts therapy to adolescents affected by autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. Also, while living in China, he earned an MA in Disability Studies in 2016 from California Baptist University virtual program.



Serving With God's Love

The Avery family returned to the US in September 2020. At this point, Kevin faced extensive MS nerve damage, and was wheelchair-bound; travel of

any sort was daunting. How was he going to serve others? Besides serving staff members as a hospital patient – reminiscent of his chaplain’s days – his hope of returning to in-person ministry was fading. Discouragement was knocking at Kevin’s door.

Thankfully, Kevin found encouragement through prayer and online ministry. In 2022, he became a friend of Ben Watson, who was serving with iTEE Global, despite being affected by blindness. That was a great encouragement! Even better, Kevin learned that other individuals with visual impairments in the US and in Zambia, Africa were in the ministry as well. Amazing! He knew that only few churches and mission organizations minister among those with disabilities and even fewer try to make disciples among them. And focusing on such a group to multiply disciple-makers? This was his first time to hear about such passion, such accessibility! Hallelujah!

Kevin became a staff member of iTEE Global in December 2022. He is grateful to work and pray alongside others whose passion is multiplying disciple-makers across the nations. Typical boundaries of poverty or disability do not hinder such a God-given vision. Amen!



Hope for Disabled Students

Students Greg Thompson, is a Canadian student with blindness. His rating of iTEE Global’s level of accessibility is four out of five stars. He says that screen readers can fall short, especially when those with blindness try to navigate through older software systems or read a map of Paul’s second missionary journey. However, iTEE Global is assisting and providing much help with audio recordings of lessons. Greg also loves discussing study questions with his cohort and praying with them each week. This is his first real opportunity to approach the Bible alongside others in such an in-depth, formal way.

Disability is not Inability



Dr. Daniel Kyungu Tchikala, recently joined iTEE Global. He is a social scientist from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); he has a physical disability. He walks with two canes or rides in a wheelchair. He indicates, “In my country – as it is in many African nations – it’s very rare to find people with disabilities among church

members, so it’s almost impossible to meet them in leadership roles. They may have the necessary

spiritual leadership gifts or skills. But they are stigmatized, even when church members do not associate their disability with witchcraft, like the general public does.”

Daniel loves building “Agape communities”. Currently, he is involved with the construction of Bethany Theological Training School. He wants to train students with disabilities alongside those without disabilities. The main distinction is that students with physical disabilities will be boarded at the center because of their need for reliable transportation. The other group will come to the center each day for class. Daniel hopes to use iTEE Global courses to disciple and train them. He is currently enrolled in the Galatians course. Next, he will take the Transformative Teaching course, as he continues to prepare the center for the students with disabilities. In itself, a disability does not hinder the Great Commission.



Blind Yet Finally Seeing

In 1983, Ray Zulu was a third year Biochemistry student. During a lab experiment in Inorganic Chemistry, another classmate accidentally splashed chemicals into his eyes. The resulting condition of glaucoma forced Ray to drop out of the four-year program. After eight years, Ray became completely blind. There was no medical chance of recovery. Being blind in Zambia is very challenging. Ray had been attending church, and was still faithful in his walk with God. Ray became a pastor in 2014;



but with a shallow knowledge of scripture, and no opportunity to study Theology. In February 2020, iTEE Global conducted a 3-day Project Nehemiah Workshop at his church in Zambia. At the end of the workshop, Ray expressed how grateful he was for the Lord to send iTEE Global. Ray says, "Everyone has access to study the word of God." It is a platform to help broaden our base of knowledge and understanding of grace." He is also serving as an iTEE Global facilitator. He leads two cohorts that include individuals with visual impairments. The day is coming when they too will train others to make disciples.

Prayer Points

Please join us in prayer:

For favor on our fundraising efforts and activities this year for the iTEE Global and for staff.

For additional qualified people to join our ministry.

For successful partnerships with organizations and churches, locally and internationally.

For God to bless and protect iTEE Global donors and their families.

For iTEE University students, to have a great start of the First Term this year.

For our facilitators to be strengthened and encouraged.

Send your personal prayer requests for our staff to pray for you, pray@iteeg.org

February Ministry Opportunities

Academic Director

Manages and directs the development and operation of the iTEE Global academic program. Ensures the quality and effectiveness of the course materials to achieve the objectives of the course and curriculum.

Special Projects Director

Oversees the efforts to establish the accreditation and certification of iTEE University. This also includes oversight of student internships, and building relationships with other organizations for gathering additional courses for the iTEE University curriculum.

VP of Educational Research and Development - Director of Research

The VP of Educational Research and Development (VPERD) is a manager/leader who oversees and directs all efforts in the continual collection and promotion of the best educational principles and practices through best principles and practices.

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